

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for creating a new annotation for a data source, the method comprising the steps of:
  - generating a data source version identifier based on a current version of the data source;
  - receiving text of the annotation; and
  - adding a new annotation record to an annotation data store, the new annotation record including the data source version identifier that was generated and the text of the annotation.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the new annotation record further includes point information indicating coordinates of at least one part of the current version of the data source that the annotation is meant to annotate.
3. The method of claim 2,
  - wherein the new annotation record includes an identifier list and the text of the annotation, and
  - the identifier list consists of a single entry that includes the data source version identifier that was generated and the point information.
4. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of receiving an indication of coordinates of at least one part of the current version of the data source that the annotation is meant to annotate.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the generating step comprises the sub-steps of:
  - using a hashing algorithm to calculate a substantially unique hash value for the current version of the data source; and
  - assigning the hash value as the data source version identifier.

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6. A computer program product for creating a new annotation for a data source, the computer program product comprising:

a storage medium readable by a processing circuit and storing instructions for execution by the processing circuit for performing a method comprising the steps of:

generating a data source version identifier based on a current version of the data source;

receiving text of the annotation; and

adding a new annotation record to an annotation data store, the new annotation record including the data source version identifier that was generated and the text of the annotation.

7. The computer program product of claim 6, wherein the new annotation record further includes point information indicating coordinates of at least one part of the current version of the data source that the annotation is meant to annotate.

8. The computer program product of claim 7,  
wherein the new annotation record includes an identifier list and the text of the annotation, and

the identifier list consists of a single entry that includes the data source version identifier that was generated and the point information.

9. The computer program product of claim 6, wherein the generating step of the method comprises the sub-steps of:

using a hashing algorithm to calculate a substantially unique hash value for the current version of the data source; and

assigning the hash value as the data source version identifier.

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10. A method of carrying forward annotations to a data source when the data source is modified, each of the annotations being stored as an annotation record in an annotation data store, the method comprising the steps of:

generating or retrieving a first data source version identifier based on a prior version of the data source;

generating or retrieving a second data source version identifier based on a modified version of the data source;

querying the annotation data store for the annotations that apply to the prior version of the data source; and

adding a new entry into the annotation record of each relevant annotation that is returned by the query, the new entry in the annotation record including the second data source version identifier and point information indicating coordinates of at least one part of the modified version of the data source that this annotation is meant to annotate.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of filtering the annotations that are returned by the query so as to remove any annotation that is not relevant to the modified version of the data source.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the filtering step includes the sub-step of determining whether each annotation that is returned by the query is relevant or not relevant to the modified version of the data source based on the point information stored in the annotation data store for that annotation.

13. The method of claim 10,

wherein the annotation record for each annotation includes an identifier list and the text of the annotation, and

the identifier list includes one or more list entries, each list entry comprising one data source version identifier and point information.

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14. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of generating or retrieving a second data source version identifier comprises the sub-steps of:

using a hashing algorithm to calculate a substantially unique hash value for the modified version of the data source; and

assigning the hash value as the second data source version identifier.

15. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of calculating the point information or the modified version of the data source from the point information stored in the annotation data store for the prior version of the data source.

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16. A computer program product for creating a new annotation for a data source, the computer program product comprising:

a storage medium readable by a processing circuit and storing instructions for execution by the processing circuit for performing a method comprising the steps of:

generating or retrieving a first data source version identifier based on a prior version of the data source;

generating or retrieving a second data source version identifier based on a modified version of the data source;

querying the annotation data store for the annotations that apply to the prior version of the data source; and

adding a new entry into the annotation record of each relevant annotation that is returned by the query, the new entry in the annotation record including the second data source version identifier and point information indicating coordinates of at least one part of the modified version of the data source that this annotation is meant to annotate.

17. The computer program product of claim 16, wherein the method further comprises the step of filtering the annotations that are returned by the query so as to remove any annotation that is not relevant to the modified version of the data source.

18. The computer program product of claim 16,  
wherein the annotation record for each annotation includes an identifier list and the text of the annotation, and

the identifier list includes one or more list entries, each list entry comprising one data source version identifier and point information.

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19. The computer program product of claim 16, wherein in the method the step of generating or retrieving a second data source version identifier comprises the sub-steps of:

    using a hashing algorithm to calculate a substantially unique hash value for the modified version of the data source; and  
    assigning the hash value as the second data source version identifier.

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20. An annotation system in which annotations to a data source are carried forward when the data source is modified, each of the annotations being stored as an annotation record in an annotation data store, the method comprising the steps of:

a processor generating a first data source version identifier based on a prior version of the data source, and generating a second data source version identifier based on a modified version of the data source;

a data store interface querying the annotation data store for the annotations that apply to the prior version of the data source, and adding a new entry into the annotation record of each relevant annotation that is returned by the query, the new entry in the annotation record including the second data source version identifier and point information indicating coordinates of at least one part of the modified version of the data source that this annotation is meant to annotate.

21. The annotation system of claim 20, further comprising the step of filtering the annotations that are returned by the query so as to remove any annotation that is not relevant to the modified version of the data source.

22. The method of claim 20,

wherein the annotation record for each annotation includes an identifier list and the text of the annotation, and

the identifier list includes one or more list entries, each list entry comprising one data source version identifier and point information.